

### The Reuniting Families Act

Imagine being separated from your spouse, minor children, sisters and brothers for years, even decades, due to bureaucratic delays from massive backlogs, insufficient staffing, and visa quotas.

In the 111th Congress, I introduced H.R. 2709 to protect our families. I am proud to reintroduce the Reuniting Families Act to ensure that our efforts on immigration reform are truly comprehensive and support the core value of keeping families together – all families.

Family members have waited too long to be reunited with their spouses, children, and other loved ones overseas, and this legislation reflects our family values and reunites families to strengthen our communities and our economy.

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### Need for Legislation

The current family-based immigration system has not been updated in over 20 years – keeping spouses, children and their parents separated for years and often decades, despite the fact that the family has played by the rules. For example, the wait for the siblings program for the Philippines is over 23 years. There are currently 4.7 million people in the family immigration backlog waiting unconscionable periods of time to reunite with their family members. This bill takes important steps toward fixing our broken family immigration system by reducing the waiting times for legal immigrants.

The bill contains practical solutions for reducing family immigration visa backlogs and promoting humane and timely reunification of immigrant families. Specifically, the bill includes provisions that would ensure that visas are allocated efficiently; alleviate lengthy wait times that keep legal immigrants and their overseas loved ones separated for years, and decrease measures that prevent family members from obtaining visas. The bill also eliminates discrimination in immigration law against same-sex, permanent partners and their families who are seeking to reunite.

Efficient, fair and effective avenues for legal, family-based immigration are vital to keep

- Families pool resources to start and run businesses that create American jobs, purchase homes, and send their American children to college to obtain the skills they need to contribute to our economy and strengthen American industry;
- Families provide care for young children, the sick, and elderly, when other options remain unaffordable, so that breadwinners can contribute to our nation's economy; and
- Families provide security for aging workforces, which is particularly important for America given the jeopardized social security system.

Family members have waited too long to be reunited with their spouses, children, and other loved ones overseas. This legislation reflects our family values and reunites families to strengthen our communities and our economy.

## Bill Summary

The Reuniting Families Act would

- Recapture family and work visas that have gone unused and unclaimed due to bureaucratic delay;
  - Reduce the long backlog for families trying to reunite with their loved ones by classifying lawful permanent resident spouses and children as “immediate relatives” and exempting them from numerical caps on family immigration;
  - Increase per-country limits from 7% to 10% so that nations with a higher demand for workers can better equip the American economy with talent;
  - Allow families to reunite in the face of numerous hardships, including family separation and death of a petitioner;
  - Provide equal treatment for all stepchildren and biological children under immigration laws
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- Recognize the sacrifices of our military by exempting children of World War II Filipino veterans from numerical caps; and
  - Allow family members to reunite despite bars to reentry.

## List of Endorsements in 112th Congress

## Press and Statements of Support in the 111th Congress

- [Reuniting Families Press Conference](#)

- [Statement of Support: Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#)
- [Statement of Support: American Immigration Lawyers Association](#)
- [Statement of Support: Church World Service](#)
- [Statement of Support: United Methodist Church](#)
- [Statement of Support: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service](#)
- [Statement of Support: American Jewish Committee](#)
- [Statement of Support: Episcopal Church](#)
- [Roll Call Features Rep. Honda's Call for Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#)
- [Roll Call Features Rep Honda in Launch of Reuniting Families Act](#)
- [Rep. Honda op-ed on the Reuniting Families Act in The Hill](#)
- [Politico Features Rep Honda on Immigration Legislation](#)
- [New York Times Features Rep Honda and Immigration Rights for Same-Sex Couples](#)
- [AFP Features Rep Honda's Family Immigration Legislation](#)
- [NBC Video Interview discussing Reuniting Families Act](#)
- [Rep. Honda on NPR discussing Asian Americans and Immigration Reform](#)
- [Rep. Honda on NPR \(WAMU\) discussing The Reuniting Families Act](#)
- [Washington Times Features Rep Honda's Introduction of Immigration Legislation](#)
- [Washington Blade Features Rep. Honda on Immigration Legislation](#)
- [Miami Herald Features Rep Honda on Immigration Legislation](#)
- [Saipan Tribune Features Rep. Honda's Introduction of the Reuniting Families Act](#)
- [Rep. Honda op-ed in Dawn Quarterly Newsletter](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign Lauds Introduction of Reuniting Families Act](#)
- [Powerful Op-Ed in San Francisco Chronicle: Gay rights battle for immigration reform](#)